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The Intelligence War

HOW REAGAN MAY RESHAPE CIA

By ROBERT MOSS

ONE of the unresolved debates among Mr Ronald Reagan's foreign policy advisers is over how the Central Intelligence Agency will be reshaped if he wins the November elections.

It is universally accepted that the present CIA Director, Admiral Stansfield Turner, would have to go. He is bitterly criticised by intelligence professionals for having permitted to become excessively subservient to the political line of the present Administration, and this feeling was not assuaged by his appearance on some of Carter's televised campaign broadcasts.

There is also widespread sympathy in the Reagan camp for the view that the CIA has been so leached of experienced operatives as a result of successive waves of sackings that there is a need to bring back many recently retired men as consultants who could supervise the refurbishing of its resources for intelligence collection, counter-intelligence and covert action.

There are also complaints from several quarters that the CIA's defects as an analytical agency long predate the Carter Administration, and that its record of estimative failure on such issues as Soviet defence spending or weaponry capabilities is so egregious that it should be deprived of its present role as co-ordinator of the American intelligence community.

Competing service

Some of Mr Reagan's advisers are strongly convinced of the need for competitive intelligence estimates. Some recommend elevating the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) into an assessments agency with equal authority to the CIA. People with a background in the Pentagon, understandably, tend to argue most enthusiastically for this prescription.

Any carving-up of the CIA's present range of responsibilities appears little short of heresy to most former CIA men, however, and as those who rallied to their former,

Director, Mr George Bush, now move in behind Mr Reagan, there is likely to be a battle for the mind of the potential President.

No single candidate is tipped, as yet, as the next CIA Director if Reagan wins. But two who appear to have lead positions in the field are General Daniel O. Graham, the ebullient former chief of the DIA or (if a man from the CIA stable should win) Mr Ted Shackley, a veteran operations officer whose experience ranges from Berlin to Indochina to responsibility for Western Hemisphere activities.

Agee group

helps Manley

In the violent run-up to the Jamaican elections, the Prime Minister, Mr Michael Manley, has been able to count on energetic propaganda support from a group of American radicals who are closely associated with the CIA's "ideological defector," Mr Philip Agee.

The theme of the campaign is identical to the one developed by Mr Agee himself when he toured Jamaica before the last national elections: the CIA is engaged in an ambitious "destabilisation" programme designed to bring down the Manley Government, and anyone who dares to criticise the far-reaching Cuban subversion in the country (such as the outspoken opposition Press) must be a tool of the CIA. The theme has been taken up by Agee associates like Ellen Ray, a co-editor of the COVERT ACTION INFORMATION BULLETIN, a publication exclusively dedicated to expose alleged CIA agents and operations around the world.

Early this month two days after Mr Louis Wolf, another co-editor of the BULLETIN, named Mr Richard Kinsman and 14 other members of the American Embassy in Kingston as alleged CIA officers, Mr Kinsman's house was attacked with automatic gunfire and a fire bomb.

A radical researcher Fred Landis has been making further claim under cover CIA op

Mr Landis was associated with Orlando Letelier, the Chilean Socialist who was assassinated in Washington in 1976, time he was acting as the Transnational Institute, an offshoot of an influential Left-wing think-tank called the Institute for Policy Studies.

After Letelier's death, his associates were embarrassed by the publication of documents proving that he had been secretly receiving a monthly subsidy from the Cubans, and had worked in close contact with identified members of Castro's intelligence service, the DGI and the KGB.

This raised suspicions that Letelier may have figured in a classical "false flag" operation, designed to lure unsuspecting American liberals and New Leftists into compromising relations with Soviet bloc intelligence.

Press conference

With the support of a little-known group called the Citizens Research and Investigation Committee (CRIC), Mr Landis recently convened a Press conference in Washington at which he claimed that the Letelier documents had been part of a disinformation exercise mounted by the CIA and the Chilean secret service.

Mr Landis was lent vocal support by other leading members of CRIC, including Mr Donald Freed, who set up an organisation called "Friends of the Panthers" in 1969 as a white support group for the Black Panthers.

Their efforts to deny the documentary evidence on Letelier's involvement with the KGB and the DGI inspired general incredulity. The evidence consists of papers found in Letelier's briefcase, which were shown to a journalist by his widow. The propaganda war acts shriller in Jamaica as political violence continues to increase. The Cubans are clearly bent on protecting

squads

West European security experts are braced for a serious revival of Palestinian terrorism over the next few months, as the result of decisions reportedly reached at a meeting of the PLO's operations department in Beirut in early May.

Key leaders who attended this meeting were Abu Jihad, the PLO's military chief and Azmi Zeheir, his special assistant, who is responsible for the training of terrorist attack squads. The meeting was chaired by Yasser Arafat.

According to Western intelligence sources, the PLO chiefs agreed to step up recruitment on non-Arabs for high-risk missions against targets in Europe and Israel.

There appear to have been two motives for this decision. First, at a time when the PLO is making notable headway in its campaign for international recognition, it makes sense to delegate controversial terror operations to auxiliaries who can be publicly disowned.

Suicide missions

Second, there have been reports of desertions from PLO camps in Lebanon and Syria by Palestinian recruits.

To maintain discipline, PLO commanders are said to have imposed strict punishment, ranging from solitary confinement to shooting in the legs or even execution, on recruits who refuse to embark on suicide missions.

Abu Tayeb, the chief of the PLO's special assault group, code-named "Force 17," is said to have despatched recruiting agents to Italy, West Germany and France to seek to enlist young men and women who may be induced to join because of the need for money, drug addiction or psychological problems.